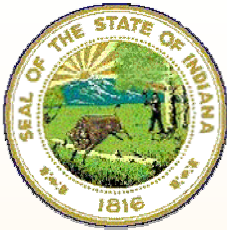


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Dear Friends:

I would like to take this opportunity to inform you of a few of the issues facing legislators as we begin the 114th Indiana General Assembly in January. The four-month long session, by law, must adjourn on or before April 29, 2005. During that time, lawmakers will consider hundreds of proposals and make public policy decisions that will affect Indiana and its citizens for the next several years.

How to properly fund public schools, provide relief for Hoosiers most affected by rising health care costs, enhance economic development initiatives, continue efforts to retrain our workforce and create more jobs are just a few of the issues to be considered as we work together to make Indiana an even better place to live, work and raise our families.

Crafting a new state budget for the next two fiscal years will top the legislative agenda. Although we have managed to maintain solid reserves throughout the national recession, the state is facing a gap between expected spending and projected revenues. The key to managing the budget will be to cut spending by finding new efficiencies, consolidating agencies and eliminating ineffective programs. It is also vitally important that we protect services and funding for education, or else Indiana will begin to lose its ability to develop economically and grow our way out of the current fiscal situation.

I would like to request your input on the enclosed survey, which deals with legislation likely to be considered. I hope you will take time to complete the survey online or return it to me by mail. Once all responses have been tallied, you will receive the survey results.

Additionally, you will find information on how to get involved and stay informed. You can subscribe to receive my weekly email updates or to receive them periodically by mail. You can log on to the General Assembly's web site, track legislation and obtain full bill texts and committee hearing information. You can also contact me for legislative information or if you are experiencing any problems with which I can be of assistance.

As your State Senator, it is my job to communicate to the General Assembly the issues that matter most to the citizens of Senate District 46. Most of the legislation will in some way affect all of us, our families and our communities. Please contact me by phone, mail or email, and let me know your thoughts and concerns. The legislative process works best when citizens get involved. I look forward to hearing from you.

Wishing you a healthy and prosperous New Year,

Constitutional Amendments

How do you make changes to the Indiana Constitution?

Amending the Indiana Constitution is a very difficult process, as it should be, so that our most precious document is not easily changed. The amendment procedure is laid out in Article 16 of the Indiana Constitution, and the process is as follows:

1. A measure to amend the Indiana Constitution is proposed by an elected member of the Indiana General Assembly.
2. The joint resolution must pass both the State Senate and House of Representatives during two consecutive general assemblies. A general assembly consists of two legislative sessions, one long and one short, so a joint resolution would have to pass one of the sessions during the 114th General Assembly, which runs through 2005 and 2006, and again during one of the two sessions of the 115th General Assembly, which spans 2007 and 2008.
3. Once the joint resolution has been approved by two consecutive general assemblies, the proposed amendment is placed on the November general election ballot for voter consideration.
4. If a majority of Hoosier voters support the resolution, the Indiana Constitution becomes amended.

Most recently, voters decided to amend the State Constitution to form a succession plan for the offices of Governor and Lt. Governor, to set uniform starting dates for terms of certain county officials, and to expand the ability of the General Assembly to enact property tax exemptions.

Copies of the Indiana Constitution are available to the public through my office. Please call **800-382-9467 ext. 2-9526** or e-mail me at **S46@in.gov** for more information.

Serve as a Senate Page!

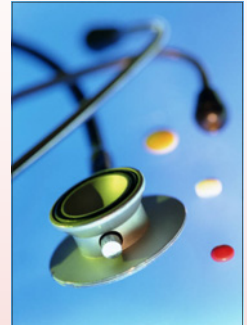
Students between the ages of 12 and 18 may apply to serve as Student Pages while the General Assembly is in session from January 4 through April 29. This day off school is considered an excused absence.



To apply or receive further information, interested students should contact my State Capitol office at **800-382-9467, ext. 2-9526**.

Focus On: **HEALTH CARE**

The rising cost of health care will undoubtedly receive much attention this session. As many as 600,000 Hoosiers are without health insurance coverage. Many of these individuals are employed by small businesses that cannot afford to provide coverage.



A governor's task force has been developing a plan designed to reduce the growing number of Hoosiers with no health insurance. The "Hoosier Health Plan" recommends the pooling of small businesses and individuals who are self-employed to provide them with affordable health care under a bulk-purchasing plan with competitive rates. The state received federal funding to support the startup of the program, but it will be up to the new administration and the General Assembly to determine how to use the grant for pilot programs.

Being able to provide quality, affordable health insurance to many of Indiana's uninsured is more than a health care or insurance issue. It also relates to economic development and jobs. The majority of Indiana businesses are small, and their success is

**"As many as
600,000 Hoosiers
are without health
insurance coverage."**

being threatened by rising health care costs. Many small businesses are finding it increasingly difficult to keep employ-

ees because of the financial burden health care has become.

Legislators are also expected to consider legislation to allow small businesses to join the state's new bulk prescription drug purchasing program, which was established by the 2004 General Assembly. The program created a pool of more than 400,000 state, local and public university employees to increase the state's buying power and the ability to negotiate lower prescription drug costs. Under a bill to be introduced in 2005, legislators will be considering the possibility of expanding the pool to include small businesses, county hospitals and non-profit organizations.

2005 Legislative Survey

You may also complete this survey on-line at www.in.gov/S46

Feel free to have another family member respond to questions in column #2.

Respondent
#1

Respondent
#2

PLEASE COMPLETE, DETACH HERE, FOLD, ADD POSTAGE, & RETURN.

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| 1. Should Indiana join several other states in a new drug-import program to make cheaper prescription drugs available from Canada and Europe, despite a federal ban on the imports? | 1. Support <input type="checkbox"/>
Oppose <input type="checkbox"/> | Support <input type="checkbox"/>
Oppose <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Currently, Clark and Floyd counties are two of the 15 Indiana counties that observe daylight-saving time during the spring and summer months. Would you support legislation to require the rest of the state to observe daylight-saving time as proposed by Governor-elect Daniels? | 2. Support <input type="checkbox"/>
Oppose <input type="checkbox"/> | Support <input type="checkbox"/>
Oppose <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Should the General Assembly approve legislation to authorize video gambling machines at Indiana's horse racetracks and off-track betting facilities to support the struggling horse racing industry? | 3. Support <input type="checkbox"/>
Oppose <input type="checkbox"/> | Support <input type="checkbox"/>
Oppose <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. The Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress-Plus (ISTEP+) program is currently given in the fall to students in Grades 3, 6, 8 and 10 to allow teachers to address what students need to learn. Some believe the test should be moved to the spring as a measure of what students have learned. Opponents feel this leaves little time for student improvements. Would you support legislation to move the ISTEP+ test to the spring? | 4. Support <input type="checkbox"/>
Oppose <input type="checkbox"/> | Support <input type="checkbox"/>
Oppose <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Legislators approved the creation of charter schools in 2002, which provides another public school option. Currently, Indiana has 25 charters in operation serving nearly 3,000 students. Do you support further expansion of the program? | 5. Support <input type="checkbox"/>
Oppose <input type="checkbox"/> | Support <input type="checkbox"/>
Oppose <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Do you support amending the Indiana State Constitution to include language that would clearly define marriage as a union between a man and a woman, even though this language already exists in current Indiana state law (Indiana Code 31-11-1-1)? | 6. Support <input type="checkbox"/>
Oppose <input type="checkbox"/> | Support <input type="checkbox"/>
Oppose <input type="checkbox"/> |

Additional Comments: _____

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this survey. Your opinions are very important to me!



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complete bill informa-
tion and committee
hearing dates

www.in.gov/legislative/

Stay Informed

To keep you up-to-date on the many issues being considered by the Indiana General Assembly, I will be distributing brief updates discussing the challenges we face here in Indiana. If you are interested in receiving these periodic updates, please check the appropriate box.

- ☐ Please mail issue updates to my home address.
- ☐ Please send issue updates to me via Email. My Email address is: (print clearly)
_____ or go online to www.in.gov/s46 and subscribe now.
- ☐ I am not interested at this time.

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Sipes '05 Legislative Survey Response